



**City of Chicopee  
City Council  
Public Safety Committee**

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**Members**

Robert J. Zygarowski, Chair  
Frank Laflamme, Vice Chair  
Jerry Roy  
Gary Labrie  
Shane Brooks

APPROVED 4-24-19

**MINUTES  
February 27, 2019**

The following are the minutes of a public hearing held Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 6:30 PM in the City Council Chambers, Fourth Floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013.

**Members Present**

Zygarowski, Laflamme, Labrie, Roy, Brooks

**Also Present**

Dan Garvey (Associate City Solicitor), Councilor Courchesne, Councilor Balakier, Frank Boron (Code Enforcer), Carl Dietz (Building Commissioner), Elizabette Botelho (DPW Superintendent)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

In compliance with the Open Meeting Law the Chairman asked if anyone in the audience was recording the meeting. Hearing none the meeting continued.

Motion made by Councilor Laflamme and second by Councilor Zygarowski to take Item #1 and Item #2 together. Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

**ITEM #1 & ITEM #2**

Request from the Chicopee Board of Health / Health Department to discuss the implementation of a Safe Syringe Access Program in the City of Chicopee.

BE IT ORDERED THAT the Public Safety Committee meet with the Board of Health Commission and the Health Director to discuss the implementation of a new Needle Exchange Program.

Also present at the meeting were Liz Whynott (Director of HIV Health & Prevention from tapestry), Pedro Alvarez (Assistant Director for Urban Drug User Health tapestry), and Alison Proctor (City of Springfield, Program Director, Opioid Overdose Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services) Theresa Picard (Health Commissioner), Janet Ely (Health Commissioner), Ernest Mathieu (Health Commissioner).

Liz Whynott stated that she has overseen 5 Syringe Services/Drug User Health Programs in the area. She also stated that although Tapestry provides syringes but it is a very small part of what they do. A lot of the work done is on focusing and providing interventions to people that have been shown to decrease rate of fatal overdoses and also to decrease the rates of HIV and Hepatitis C.

Their services have increased access to treatment. People that use drugs and specifically people that inject opioids including heroine, the addiction can be very shameful. And often times causes people to be secretive. Tapestry services is one of the only places that people can come to and be completely honest about what is going on in their life. Tapestry tries to meet the person where they are at that moment. Tapestry tries to build trust and provide the person with services that he or she needs at that moment. They also want the person to come back for what they need. Tapestry has seen that often times people are not ready for treatment at that moment but that does not mean that they won't be ready eventually and it also does not mean that there aren't things that they can do to improve their health and to reduce the chances of HIV or Hepatitis C. The local Board of Health approves a syringe service program to occur. Then the Department of Public Health is given authority to move forward with the process of choosing a program. Liz continued that if the Board of Health approves a syringe service program that does not mean that Tapestry will be providing that service. It is just to the state to determine which program will be selected. All syringe programs offer naloxone. Liz stated that naloxone is distributed anonymously. All syringe programs do a lot of counseling and testing. Liz stated that the services that Tapestry provides are incredibly important.

Pedro Alvarez stated that with the syringe access program the syringe portion is maybe 15% of the work that Tapestry does. Most of the work is empowering people to make safer decisions about their drug use. People are trained on naloxone, overdose prevention, and harm reduction practices, screening and counseling for HIV, STDs and STIs. A lot of outreach is done where Tapestry goes out to homeless encampments. Pedro further stated that it's important for Tapestry to build relationships with people. Tapestry tries to connect people to resources that are available.

Alison Proctor distributed a map of overdoses both fatal and unfatal. According to the map in Chicopee from January 2016 to March 2018 the number was 586. The number reflects where the overdose occurred does not necessarily mean the person lived in Chicopee. Alison further stated that in Chicopee the number of fatal overdoses has decreased. She stated that she attributes that to the availability of naloxone and more outreach efforts that are going on in neighboring towns.

Ernest Mathieu stated that he is a Heath Commissioner but also works for the Holyoke Health Department. He stated that Tapestry has been in Holyoke for the past 7 years. He stated that Tapestry is a very professional organization. Ernest stated that Tapestry's office on Cabot Street is discreet and the average person would not even know that it's a needle exchange program. He stated that there are no lines and no one hangs around outside. He supports Tapestry's goals and objectives. He also stated that if the Holyoke Health Department calls Tapestry for needles found in parks or alleyways or other locations in Holyoke they pick up the phone and call Tapestry and within hours the needles are picked up and removed. They are a great help to the Board of Health. He further stated that he urges the City Council to support the Board of Health if they vote to approve this program in the City.

Liz stated that the Holyoke program takes in more needles than it gives out. The Holyoke staff does daily street outreach. During the warmer months monthly community pick-ups are held.

Councilor Courchesne thanked Lisa Sanders for reaching out to Tapestry. He further stated that a little girl brought him a needle at Nash Park and it broke his heart. He stated that it is important that the City support this program. He said anyone who uses a needle for injection can utilize a needle exchange program not just for drug users.

Councilor Brooks stated that Tapestry is correct when they say that the needle exchange is just a small portion of what they really do. He feels that having a presence in the downtown will be

meaningful for the City. Not only will it get needles off the street but provide access to healthcare that people currently don't enjoy or aren't able to access freely. He is looking forward to seeing this move forward.

Pedro Alvarez stated that Tapestry coordinates with communities. This past fall Tapestry teamed up with Holyoke and provided Hep vaccinations. Tapestry also goes out to agencies to provide education to staff.

Councilor Laflamme asked if the Board of Health is in support of this program coming to Chicopee.

Theresa Picard, Health Commissioner, stated that she is in support. She also stated that in the western part of the state we do not have enough beds for our youth. This prohibits them getting the treatment that they need. This is a great avenue for these individuals to seek some type of help.

Councilor Roy asked if naran is available to people.

Pedro Alvarez stated that in Massachusetts there is a standard order for naran in all pharmacies. If you have private insurance you can go to a pharmacy and pick up a kit. With private insurance you pay a co-pay. If you have MassHealth it's free of charge. He further stated that you can go to any Tapestry site and they will instruct you on how to use it. It takes approximately 20 minutes.

Councilor Roy asked what the shelf life is for naran. Pedro Alvarez stated that it's one year. He further stated that it's effective even after the expiration date.

Councilor Labrie asked if someone is having a heart attack or seizure and someone administers naran is there liability because Tapestry provided the medicine?

Liz Whynott stated that when Governor Patrick declared an opioid crisis he also expanded the Good Samaritan law to cover all first responders. So lay people have always had no liability.

Liz Whynott stated that recent data has shown that over 90% of the heroine in western Massachusetts has Fentanyl in it.

Chairman Zygarowski asked if a location has been established in Chicopee for a syringe access program.

Janet Ely, Health Commissioner, stated that the Board of Health is meeting next week to gather public input and then the Commissioners will vote on the program. Her understanding is that once the Commission takes a vote to move forward the state takes over and the state arranges where it will be located and they pay for it.

Liz Whynott stated that the state will collaborate with the city when they are determining the location of the program.

Chairman Zygarowski stated that Lisa Sanders (Health Director) could not attend this meeting but she is fully in support of this program.

Councilor Balakier stated that he is in support of this program. He asked how quickly the program comes on once the Board of Health approves it. Liz Whynott stated that it can be a lengthy process; anywhere for 6 months to a year.

Chairman Zygarowski asked why the number of opioid overdoses is so high in Chicopee. Commissioner Mathieu stated that he feels its lack of education and lack of programming. Commissioner Picard stated that there is denial in the city, lack of education, and families not getting information.

Councilor Brooks stated that it's access. He said that the number indicated on the paper does not mean that they are all Chicopee residents. It's that the person chose to shut up in Chicopee. It's where the person is obtaining the drug.

### **Public Input**

Al Picard stated that as former Principal at Chapin School he saw firsthand what Councilor Courchesne stated earlier about the little girl who brought him a needle. He further stated that he would like to see in the City in addition to the syringe program being endorsed a citywide committee consisting of elected officials, law enforcement, members of the school department, and community leaders. This would be a community task force to dig in and try to do all that can be done to find out what the root of the causes are. Other communities have such committees.

Alison Proctor stated that she is co-chairman of the Hampden County Addiction Task Force and Chicopee is an active member of this task force.

Motion made by Councilor Laflamme and second by Councilor Zygarowski to forward the Board of Health's approval of a Needle Exchange Program.

**Committee vote        5 – 0 favorable.**

### **ITEM #3**

BE IT ORDERED THAT the DPW appear at a Public Safety Committee meeting to discuss sidewalk concerns and snow removal.

Councilor Laflamme stated that he filed this order because each winter season the same people call him sidewalk issues. He further stated that it's the same violators each year. He also stated that he has been working with Elizabette Botelho on this issue and Liz has a system in place to help with this issue. He also stated that the City has an ordinance in place that states that all sidewalks must be cleared 24 hours after a snowstorm. Some of the areas that are in violation are very dangerous. He stated that Liz is sending letters to the violators. She has noticed that once the owner receives the letter he or she has gone out and cleared the snow.

Liz Botelho stated that she has created a folder on the DPW drive for each property that's a problem. Everyone for the first time is receiving letter. If a Councilor or her staff sees a location that either the sidewalks aren't clean, snowbanks are over 3.5 feet, a contractor is plowing a driveway or parking lot and pushing the snow into the street those are all in violation of city ordinance. That person gets a letter which serves as their warning. The next time the city goes back and sees that the person is in violation a citation will be issued. This is late in the season right now and this process for right now is the best solution. She suggested that some educational material be included in the electric bills to educate the public. In the past three weeks she has sent out 9 letters.

Councilor Laflamme presented the committee pictures of problem areas.

Councilor Brooks suggested that commercial property owners be sent a separate mailing at the beginning of next season informing them of the expectations going forward so they can inform their snowplowing companies and that there will be no variations from it.

Elizabeth Botelho stated that she has stopped contractors plowing into the street from private properties and informed them of city ordinances. However, she cannot cite the contractor only the property owner can be cited.

Councilor Courchesne asked what the DPW is doing about the city contracted snow-plow operators that are packing corners with snow. Elizabeth Botelho stated that the snow-plow operators should not be packing the corners. There are chasers that go out to make sure that everyone is complying with proper snow removal.

Councilor Brooks stated that he is getting a lot of positive feedback about the city employee plow operators doing a great job.

Elizabeth Botelho stated that repeat private snowplow operators do not get called back to plow for the city the following year. She further stated that the highway department is short 11 employees.

Councilor Zygarowski asked about the reverse parking program. Elizabeth stated that she has reached out to the Holyoke DPW Superintendent where they have a reserve parking ban. She will be working with him on his thoughts so that something could be in place for the next season.

Councilor Courchesne spoke about a progressive fine system in the city.

Motion made by Councilor Brooks and second by Councilor Zygarowski to place on file.

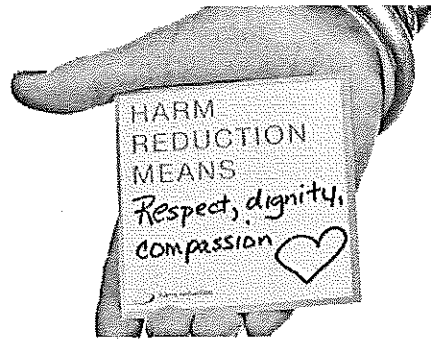
**Committee vote        5 – 0 favorable.**

**ITEM #4**

Minutes – November 30, 2017 Motion made by Councilor Roy and second by Councilor Zygarowski to approve. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM.

## Drug User Health and Syringe Services Program



Pedro Alvarez  
Assistant Director for Urban  
Drug User Health

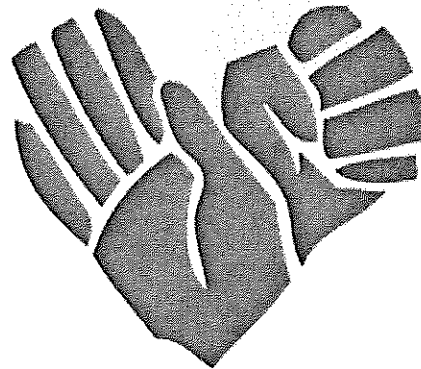


Liz Whynott  
Director of HIV Health &  
Prevention



## Drug User Health Programs:

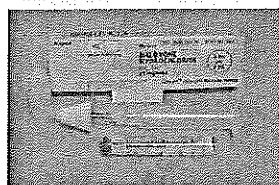
- ▶ Believe everyone deserves the same level of treatment, regardless if a person uses drugs or not.
- ▶ Acknowledge we all have a right to make decisions about our health, not have them made for us
- ▶ Empower people who used drugs to make safer decisions about their drug use or sex practices
- ▶ Create non judgmental, safe spaces





## Syringe Services/Drug User Health Programs

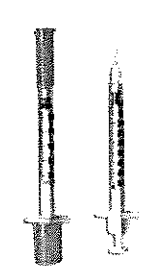
Northampton  
Syringe Service,  
1995



Springfield, HIV  
Prevention ( La Voz),  
2002

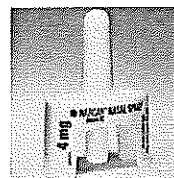
Springfield  
Syringe Service,  
2018

Holyoke Syringe  
Access, 2012



Greenfield  
Syringe Service,  
2016

North Adams Syringe  
Service, 2016

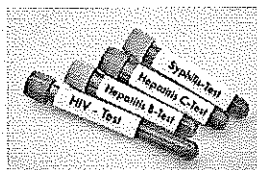


## Drug User Health Interventions

Outreach:  
Street &  
Community Based



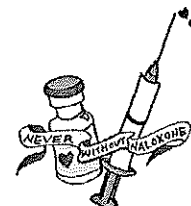
Comprehensive  
Testing Services



Syringe Services:  
Access & Disposal

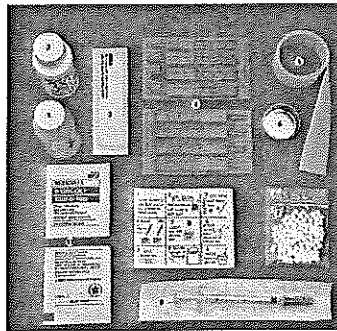


Overdose Education  
and Naloxone  
Distribution



## Syringe Services

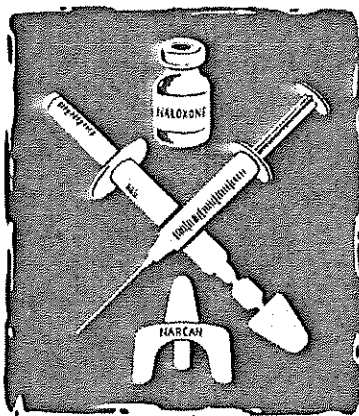
- ❖ Syringe Pick up/ Disposal
- ❖ Fixed Sites
  - ❖ All Tapestry SSP
- ❖ Mobile and Street Based
  - ❖ HSAP/ Springfield\*



- ❖ Community Syringe Pick Ups

- ❖ Safer Injection Education/ Sterile Supplies
- ❖ Risk Reduction Counseling
- ❖ Referrals to detox, MAT

## Overdose Education/ Naloxone Distribution



- ❖ OEND Massachusetts 2007
- ❖ Tapestry Narcan distribution
  - ❖ NSAP and La Voz 2008
- ❖ Stationary
- ❖ Outreach
- ❖ Local Provider Collaborations



## Comprehensive Counseling and Testing Services

- ❖ Confidential screening for HIV, HCV & STI's
- ❖ Referrals to HIV/HCV and STI Treatment
  - ❖ Linkage to Care
- ❖ Stationary testing
- ❖ Mobile testing
- ❖ Offsite- detox, correctional facilities, residential
- ❖ Sexual and drug use risk reduction counseling
  - ❖ PrEP education counseling



## Outreach: Street & Community Based

- ❖ Engagement
  - ❖ Relationship Building = Trust
  - ❖ Meeting people where they are at
- ❖ Culturally Competent
  - ❖ Have to understand the communities ; where folks use, how they use
  - ❖ Urban model VS Rural





Thank You!

Jill Shanahan

Assistant Director, Drug User  
Health

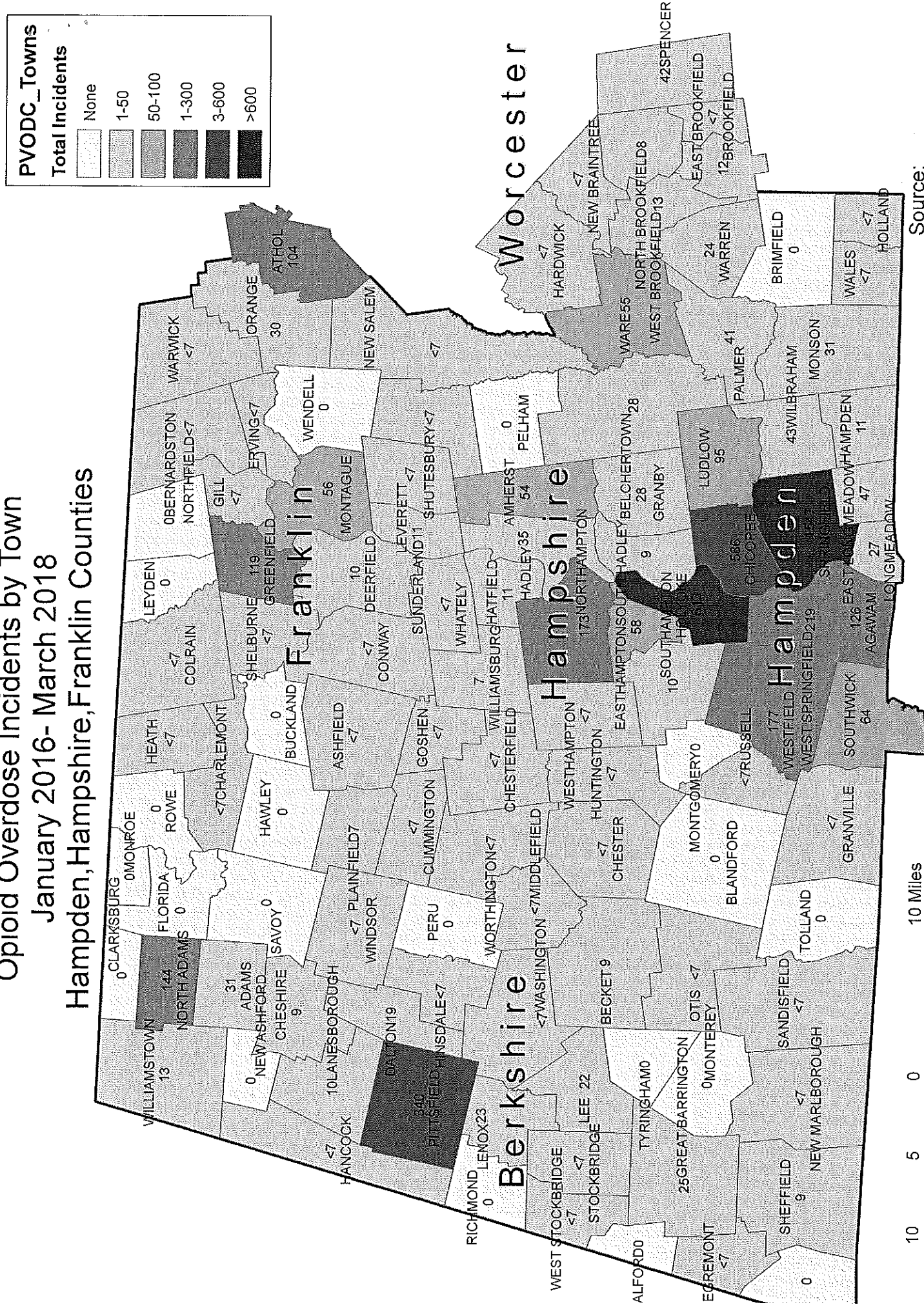


Liz Whynott

Director of HIV Health &  
Prevention



## Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin Counties



10 Miles

0 5 10

**Source:**

Massachusetts Ambulance Trip  
Record Information System (MATRIS)  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
1-1-2018